

Competitive Request for Proposals Announcement for EPA New England FY 2004 Water Quality Cooperative Agreements under the Clean Water Act section 104(b)(3)

OVERVIEW

The U. S. EPA New England announces the availability of FY 2004 Water Quality Cooperative Agreements under the Clean Water Act section 104(b)(3). These grants will be awarded to eligible applicants through a competitive process. This notice sets forth the process that will be used for selecting the proposals that EPA will award under CFDA 66.463. EPA is requesting applications be submitted by January 9, 2004.

FULL TEXT ANNOUNCEMENT

I. Funding Opportunity

EPA will fund projects relating to water quality, including "research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the cause, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of pollution." Water Quality Cooperative Agreement funds are for innovation, not ongoing operation of programs, systems, equipment or construction of infrastructure, except to a limited degree to demonstrate innovative prevention or removal of pollution.

The list below outlines the priorities that we intend to use for the selection of Water Quality Cooperative Agreement projects. We encourage you to consider this list as you develop your priorities and plans for FY 2004.

WATER QUALITY COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT PRIORITIES

Impacts of Wet Weather Flows

Trends in load reductions due to implementation of storm water
Best Management Practices (BMPs) including means of measuring effectiveness of BMPs
Storm water monitoring techniques
Efficient and effective reduction of Sanitary Sewer Overflows (SSO)
Impacts of sewage overflows
Impacts of peak wet weather flows on Publicly Owned Treatment Works (POTWs)
Environmental effectiveness of sewer separation
Compliance with Storm Water Phase II

National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Program Strategies to implement watershed-based efforts

Watershed Integration of Water Programs under CWA & Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA)
Alternative markets or treatments for excess manure
Nutrient loading reduction through trading

Ballast Water Treatment

On-board treatment or marine disposal technologies for various ships
Sediments that have collected in ballast tanks
Fate and transport in marine, estuary, and fresh water systems of any use of biocides (e.g. chlorine derivatives) to treat ballast water

Onsite/Decentralized Wastewater Treatment Systems

Effective State-level adoption of EPA management guidelines in reducing water pollution
Institutional, regulatory and funding barriers and solutions to implementation of

decentralized options
Tools for conducting comprehensive, watershed- wide assessments of risks associated with decentralized wastewater systems

Management Systems for Water Pollution Control Programs

Asset Management

Strategic best practice governance and business models of asset management
Methodologies and best practice applications and approaches for asset management
Tools and techniques for incorporating asset management into the day-to-day management of utilities
Municipal water efficiency and water demand management for infrastructure cost reduction or water pollution prevention.

Environmental Management Systems for Water Pollution Control

Public Agency and Agriculture EMSs
Integrated utility-wide EMSs that also incorporate asset management, bench marking, and other management tools

Program Innovations

Program and management efficiencies and innovations in such areas as permit issuance, data collection/submission, program integration, water quality standards development, TMDLs, monitoring, inspections, and compliance.
Innovative approaches to address operations and maintenance (O&M) issues for small communities, including tribes
Innovative approaches or methods to help communities and tribes build capacity to develop and manage water quality/wastewater programs
Innovative pretreatment tools or pilot projects for program development and implementation for disadvantaged communities, including the Mexican Border
Tools for environmental/public health improvements on the US/Mexican Border on a watershed basis

Cooling Water Intake Structures (Clean Water Act, Section 316(b))

Reduction of impingement and entrainment of aquatic organisms into cooling water intakes
Ecological effects of cooling water intake structures on aquatic environments
Effectiveness of ecological restoration activities in reducing the impact of cooling water intake structures on the aquatic environment

II. Award

EPA New England will consider competitive proposals ranging from \$5,000 to \$75,000. The timing of the selection decision is dependent on Congressional approval of a final federal budget. Under a pilot program, a portion of these funds will be targetted to state environmental agencies and Federally Recognized Indian Tribes. EPA New England expects approximately \$315,000 to be available for the competition beyond the targetted amounts. Our goal is to select projects as early as possible in 2004. Successful applicants will be invited to submit a financial assistance agreement application under Section 104(b)(3) of the Clean Water Act.

III. Eligibility

U.S. EPA New England Region is soliciting proposals from state water pollution control agencies, tribal governments, interstate agencies, and local governments interested in applying for federal assistance for the FY 04 Water Quality Cooperative Agreements under the Clean Water Act section 104(b)(3).

IV. Application and Submission

EPA, New England Region will award some Water Quality Cooperative Agreement funding on a competitive basis and evaluate project proposals based on the following criteria:

1. The relationship to the priorities listed in Section I of this notice.
2. How well the proposal addresses a regionally important need, issue, or interest.
3. Communication plan to transfer results of the project to other potentially interested parties.
4. How well the project furthers the goal of the Clean Water Act to prevent, reduce and eliminate pollution.
5. Leverage of other resources (i.e. cost share, participation of other organizations) as part of the proposed approach.
6. Cost effectiveness of the proposal.

In addition, all application work plans should include or address the following:

- A. Clearly written and detailed proposals listing each task and deliverable, including clear goals, schedules, site maps;
- B. An explanation of how/why the project outcome has a high likelihood for positive, environmental results in both the short and long term;
- C. Project results, methods, and/or approaches that are transferable to other state, tribal, and/or local governments;
- D. For applicants who have received EPA funding for prior projects under this program, the lessons learned and applied, or other changes made to this current proposal based upon past experience that will improve the current proposal;
- E. A budget with costs broken down by tasks and a description of the significant level of financial and staff commitment, and how this proposal contributes to broader state, local, or tribal agency objectives;
- F. If applicable, how this proposal incorporates the work of partners (e.g., local governments or NGOs) in achieving the goals of the project;
- G. Explain if your agency has an approved Quality Management Plan(QMP). It must be updated annually. If the project involves sampling or data collection, a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) will be required.

EPA grant application forms can be found at the following web site:

http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/how_to_apply.htm

DATES:

The deadline for EPA receipt of applications is January 9, 2004.

ADDRESS:

EPA New England is posting this call notice our website to formally request your proposals for funding. Completed applications are due no later than January 9, 2004. Send application and three copies to:

Jeanne Cosgrove (CSP)
U.S. EPA New England Region
One Congress Street, Suite 1100

Boston, Massachusetts 02114

Questions should be directed to Jeanne Cosgrove at 617-918-1669, or cosgrove.jeanne@epa.gov.

V. Application Review

Evaluation Criteria:

Grant funds are awarded through a competitive process. Funding decisions are made by EPA based on the quality of the proposal and adherence to the evaluation criteria listed below. EPA typically receives requests for funding far in excess of available funds.

1. Proposal addresses all requirements outlined in Section IV;
2. Potential Environmental Results - factors such as strong partnerships, demonstrated need for the project, and commitments to build upon the proposed project indicate high probability for positive environmental results;
3. Success of Previous Projects - for applicants who have received prior EPA funding;
4. Involvement/ Commitment of the applicant - significant financial and personnel contribution and involvement of partners is strongly encouraged;

Review and Selection Process: An EPA New England group review process will select successful proposals. The goal of the process is to assist water quality projects, including "research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the cause, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of pollution. Any funding restrictions are in accordance with 40 CFR Part 31 (Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments).

VI. Award Administration

Following the review and selection process, successful applicants will receive notification by e-mail that their proposal has been selected and will be asked to submit a financial assistance application (hard copy, if they have not already done so) for funding under CWA Sec. 104(b)(3) with administrative, national policy, and reporting requirements in accordance with 40 CFR Part 31.

Unsuccessful applicants will receive notice by e-mail.

VII. Agency Contact

Jeanne Cosgrove, 617-918-1669, Cosgrove.Jeanne@epa.gov